What are the most popular colors for new vehicles? With each new model year, different colors become the object of drivers' desires, and with emerging paint technology, color quality and durability are being enhanced.

Advanced Technology Enhances Paint Colors

The new process of base coat/clearcoat painting dramatically increases the life and range of available vehicle colors. The outer coating provides an extra layer of protection by screening out the sun's ultraviolet rays—the cause of most fading.

"New technology is allowing us to do things we couldn't do just a few years ago," says Robert Daily, color marketing manager at DuPont's Automotive Finishes Division. As a result, brighter–and clearer colors are becoming more readily available every year. In the 1970s, metallic coats lost their popularity because they tended to fade too quickly. Metallics have regained a sizeable share of the market, however, because of the introduction of the base coat/clearcoat process.

Similarly, the long-lasting finishes of pearlescent paints, which use mica flakes (metallics use aluminum flakes) to achieve a greater color depth, would not have been possible without the protection clearcoat offers.

Colors For The 1990s

Given the changes in the painting process, what does the future hold? Daily predicts that cars of the 1990s will be extremely exciting, and colors will be a part of that excitement. For 1991, DuPont predicts the popularity of deep browns, reds, and blues.

Jon Hall, chief designer with BASF Corp.'s Coatings and Inks Division, sees several oncoming trends. "For years, there were only two paint looks available—solid or metallic." Now there's the pearlescent look, with a thicker consistency that creates a "truly iridescent appearance." Like a sparkling gem, pearlescent paints produce many colors on the same surface, depending on the angle of viewing.

Hall says all 1991 cars will have this iridescent look, to some degree. He sees a decline in ordinary colors, such as brown and silver metallic.

Identifying Trends

Predicting the future of consumer color preferences is no simple task, especially since the motor companies must plan their selections at least three years in advance. Currently, DuPont is planning for model year 1992. Daily says they look at the trends in each color category. "For blue, is the trend going to be reddish blue, greenish blue, or silver blue?"

To discover the trends in color, Daily's division follows fashion in clothes and also in contract furnishings for offices and hotels. "Advertising is also important. We look at colors prevalent in video and print media." AF

Automotive Color Popularity

Full Size/Intermediates	%	Compacts	%	Trucks	%
White	13.0	Bright Red	14.3	*Med./Dk. Blue	13.1
Medium Red	11.4	*Med./Dk. Red	13.7	White	12.4
*Medium Gray	9.3	White	10.3	Red	12.0
*Silver	9.2	Black	9.8	Black	9.9
*Light Blue	8.6	*Light Blue	8.7	*Medium Red	9.4
*Dark Blue	8.5	*Bright Blue	8.3	*Medium Gray	9.3
*Dark Red	6.9	*Medium Gray	7.8	*Med./Dk. Brown	8.5
*Medium Blue	6.8	*Silver	7.6	*Light Blue	8.0
Black	6.7	*Dark Blue	7.1	*Silver	6.3
*Light Brown	5.2	*Light Brown	5.4	*Light Brown	3.6
*Med. Purple Brown	4.2	*Med./Dk. Brown	2.0	*Green	2.2
Beige	2.3	Beige	2.0	Tan	1.6
*Med./Dk. Brown	2.1	Yellow	0.9	Others	3.7
*Light Green	1.6	Others	2.2		
*Med./Dk. Green	1.0				
Others	3.2				

Source: DuPont Automotive *Metallic

Tire life cycles can be extended through correct selection, driving habits, and regular maintenance. Also, properly maintained tires increase fuel mileage, provide a secure ride, decrease stopping distance, and improve handling.

Extending Tire Life

Tires are a critical component to the well-being of a fleet's vehicles and drivers. Although tires are a visible indicator of a vehicle's condition — as any used-car buyer can attest — they are often neglected by their owners. Such negligence can be dangerous and expensive. A recent survey by Runzheimer International argues that properly maintained tires can help save fuel, provide a secure ride, decrease stopping distance, and improve handling during adverse road conditions.

Runzheimer surveyed 142 fleet operations which averaged 417 vehicles. Of the survey participants, 97 percent indicate having passenger cars in their fleets, 81 percent have full-sized vans, and 76 percent have pickups. The survey results reveal that tire life cycles can be extended through correct selection, proper driving habits, and regular maintenance.

Table 1
Fleet Tire Selection

Type of Fleet	Radial	Belted	Bias
Utility	90%	6%	4%
Government	87%	8%	5%
Business	82%	13%	5%

Source: Runzheimer

Types of Tires

There are three common designs of tires on the road today:

Bias Tires

These are the oldest design type currently in use. At one time they accounted for the majority of tire sales, but have been supplanted by radials as the most popular tire. Bias tires have stiff sidewalls as a result of two or more plies crisscrossing each other. The treads of bias ply tires tend to squirm while rolling, generating heat that decreases tire life. In addition, bias ply tires have less contact area than radial tires and are therefore less adept at handling, braking, and holding the road. Bias tires remain an option as low-priced replacements.

Belted Tires

This type of tire is similar in construction to bias ply tires, but have two or more belts running transversely across the plies. Their road manners and longevity fall between bias and radial ply tires. They have achieved a relatively small niche in the replacement market.

Radial Tires

This tire construction was first designed in the 1940s, but has only recently become popular in the United States. The plies of radial tires run at right angles to the tire's centerline and are wrapped with fabric or steel belts. This construction lends itself to flexible sidewalls and increased road contact area. Most new passenger cars and many light trucks come equipped with radial tires.

Table 1 indicates that the vast majority of fleets, regardless of classification, rely on radial tires for

their vehicles. Belted and bias ply tires are far less popular. A maximum of 13 percent of the business fleets have vehicles equipped with belted tires and only five percent of government and business fleets have vehicles that are equipped with bias tires.

Passenger Car Tire Life

Table 2 reveals that all three fleet classifications derive the greatest mileage from radial tires, illustrating another reason for the popularity of this design with fleets. Over one-half of the passenger cars in the survey respondents' fleets run a set of radials for 40,000 miles or more, with an average life cycle of 32,000 to 36,000 miles. The high mileage offered by radials means that some business fleet passenger cars with shorter than average life cycles will not need to replace tires during this period.

Nearly half of the business fleet

Table 2
Life (in Miles) of Tires on Fleet Passenger Cars

	Miles of Life in Tires					
	10K	20K	30K	40K	over 40K	Average Tire Life
Business Fleets:						
Radial	0%	6%	47%	33%	14%	36K
Belted	0%	43%	14%	36%	7%	31K
Bias	0%	20%	60%	20%	0%	30K
Utility Fleets:						
Radial	0%	14%	32%	45%	9%	35K
Belted	18%	50%	17%	17%	0%	23K
Bias	20%	80%	0%	0%	0%	18K
Government Fleets:						
Radial	2%	26%	38%	22%	12%	32K
Belted	14%	64%	18%	4%	0%	21K
Bias	16%	63%	16%	5%	0%	21K

Source: Runzheimer

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respondents reported keeping belted tires on their vehicles for 40,000 miles or more. However, government and utility fleet respondents record far fewer miles on the tires. Over three-quarters of the government fleets and 66 percent of the utility fleets achieved 20,000 miles or fewer from their belted tires. The average mileage for belted tires ranged from 21,000 for government fleets to 31,000 for business fleets.

Light Truck Tire Life

Table 3 indicates the life in miles of the survey respondents' light truck tires. All three fleet classifications extract the greatest tire life mileage on their light trucks from radials. Almost one-third of the utility fleets get 40,000 miles or more from radials. One-quarter of the business and government fleets also experience 40,000 miles or more using radial tires on their light trucks. Average radial tire mileage ranges

Table 3
Life (in Miles) of Tires on Fleet Light Trucks

	Miles of Life in Tires					
	10K	20K	30K	40K	over 40K	Average Tire Life
Business Fleets:						
Radial	0%	14%	61%	11%	14%	33K
Belted	14%	43%	29%	0%	14%	26K
Bias	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	30K
Utility Fleets:						
Radial	0%	19%	52%	24%	5%	31K
Belted	14%	43%	43%	0%	0%	23K
Bias	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	15K
Government Fleets:						
Radial	0%	29%	47%	15%	9%	30K
Belted	15%	58%	23%	4%	0%	22K
Bias	23%	46%	27%	4%	0%	21K

Source: Runzheimer

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from 33,000 miles for business fleets and 30,000 miles for government fleets.

Extending Tire Life

Fleet managers can take several steps to maximize the life of their tires. One of the simplest maintenance procedures is to check tire pressure on a regular basis. As shown in Table 4, 65 percent of the utility fleet respondents require their drivers to check tire pressures. In comparison, only 53 percent of the government and 50 percent of the business fleets expect this duty to be performed by their drivers. Most of those who don't require the driver to perform this duty rely on shop personnel to check tire pressures during regularly scheduled shop visits.

Table 4
Responsibility for Checking Tire Pressure

	Business Fleet	Utility Fleet	Gov't Fleet
Driver	50%	65%	53%
Shop Personnel	36%	35%	44%
Other	14%	0%	3%

Source: Runzheimer

Checking tire pressures on a weekly basis is a simple, yet essential, maintenance function. Tires can lose from one-half psi to two psi each month through permeation of the tire wall. Additional pressure may be lost through leaking or damaged valves and rims.

Under inflation causes premature tire failure, uneven tread wear (indicated by increased wear at the tires' shoulders), reduces fuel mileage and load capacity, and adversely affects vehicle handling and braking ability. Over inflation also causes early tire failure, uneven tread wear (indicated by increased wear at the tires' centers), and the potential for damage to the suspension components.

An equally important part of this simple maintenance step is to inspect the vehicle's tires, including the spare, while checking the pressures. Examine the tires for tread depth, foreign objects, uneven wear patterns, cut and cracked sidewalls, and damaged stems and valves.

This is also the time to inspect the wheels. Look for loose or missing lug nuts and bent or heavily rusted rims. Loose lug nuts cause the wheel mounting holes to become oblong, a condition that calls for replacement of the wheel. Missing lug nuts are a dangerous condition, and may lead to loss of the wheel while driving. Bent and rusted rims will prevent the tire from seating properly, resulting in leakage in the bead area. Wheel

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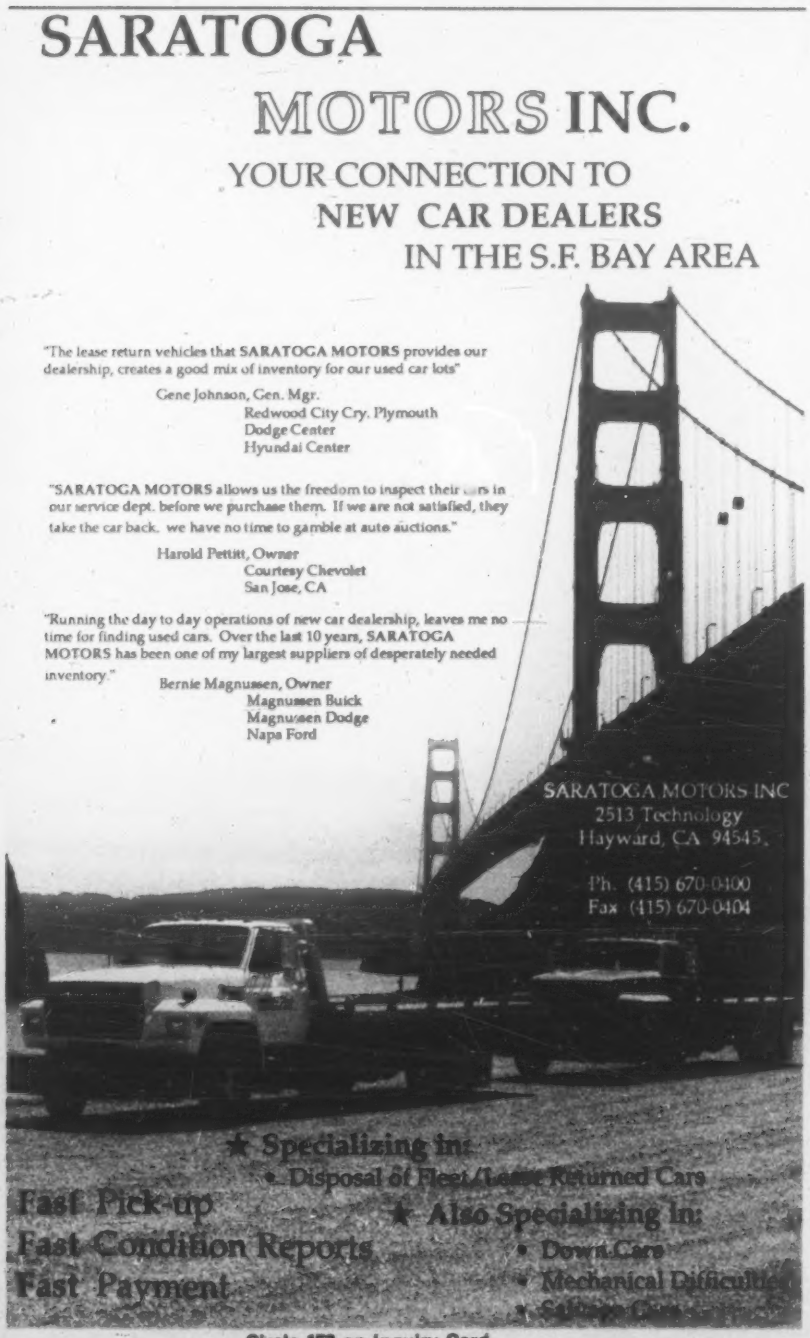
covers and trim must allow sufficient clearance for the valve stems; if not, they will eventually cut them. Missing or damaged valve stem extensions and caps should be replaced promptly.

An inexpensive way to encourage drivers to check tire pressures is to issue tire pressure gauges. Table 5 indicates that 30 percent of government fleets, 17 percent of utility, and 15 percent of the business fleets provide drivers with tire pressure gauges.

Table 5
Fleets That Provide Drivers with Tire Pressure Gauges

	Yes	No
Business Fleets	15%	85%
Utility Fleets	17%	83%
Government Fleets	30%	70%

Source: Runzheimer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Additional Factors

Other factors that affect tire life include:

- Worn shocks and struts.
- Incorrect wheel alignment.
- Poor wheel balance.
- Excessive and unbalanced loads.
- Neglecting tire rotation.
- Poor driving habits.

Worn shocks and struts cause "cupping" type wear of the tires. Shocks and struts should be replaced when ride quality deteriorates and the vehicle cannot pass the "bounce test." Faulty wheel alignment causes asymmetrical and "feathering" type of wear. Alignment should be performed when the vehicle does not track properly or pulls, and before uneven wear is evident on the tire tread.

Many current vehicle models, especially those with front-wheel drive, have adjustable rear-wheel alignment and should receive four-wheel alignments. In addition, vehicle loads should not exceed the manufacturer's rating and should be balanced as much as possible.

Unbalanced tires also suffer cupping wear of the tread. Both front and rear tires should be balanced when installing replacements and checked whenever the tires are rotated. Dynamic on-the-vehicle balancing is preferred to static or off-the-wheel dynamic balancings. Because the front and rear tires of the vehicle serve different functions, they should be rotated according to the manufacturer's recommendations to balance out wear patterns.

Poor driving habits also can shorten tire life. Jackrabbit starts, late braking, high-speed cornering, excessive spinning of tires on slippery, or loose road surfaces contribute to decreased tire life cycles — as well as consuming excess fuel, increasing brake wear, and causing suspension and powertrain damage. AF

USED CARS

The following are average used-car prices for the period ending September 1, 1989. Prices are based on wholesale activity at major dealers across the country. They are divided into three zones as indicated on the accompanying map. These averages are calculated electronically in IBM machines. They are based on clean cars only. Proper allowance should be made for upgrading sharp cars and proper deduction taken for fair cars. Automatic transmissions have been included in the averages of all models. This information is published in *Automotive Fleet* by special permission of Automotive Market Report.

88 BUICK SKYHAWK			
Coupe	6,198	6,260	6,073
Sedan	6,284	6,346	6,156
87 BUICK SKYHAWK			
Cust Coupe	5,064	5,116	4,964
Cust Sedan	5,143	5,194	5,038
88 BUICK SKYLARK			
Cust Sedan	7,623	7,700	7,472
87 BUICK SKYLARK			
Cust Sedan	6,397	6,458	6,268
88 BUICK CENTURY			
Cust Sedan	7,638	7,713	7,483
87 BUICK CENTURY			
Cust Sedan	6,419	6,482	6,289
88 BUICK LE SABRE			
Cust Sedan	9,713	9,808	9,517
87 BUICK LE SABRE			
Cust Sedan	8,080	8,157	7,915
86 CADILLAC DE VILLE			
Coupe	15,076	15,226	14,774
Sedan	15,254	15,409	14,951
87 CADILLAC DE VILLE			
Coupe	12,511	12,636	12,259
Sedan	12,664	12,791	12,411
88 CADILLAC SEVILLE			
Sedan	16,369	16,533	16,043
87 CADILLAC SEVILLE			
Sedan	13,888	14,028	13,610
88 CHEVY BERETTA			
Coupe	7,286	7,357	7,141
88 CHEVY CORSICA			
Sedan	7,572	7,648	7,421
87 CHEVY BERETTA			
Coupe	5,805	5,864	5,688
87 CHEVY CORSICA			
Sedan	5,364	5,420	5,258
88 CHEVY CAVALIER			
Sedan	6,010	6,071	5,893
87 CHEVY CAVALIER			
Sedan	4,679	4,727	4,587
88 CHEVY CELEBRITY			
Sedan	7,232	7,305	7,088
87 CHEVY CELEBRITY			
Sedan	5,763	5,821	5,648
88 CHEVY CAPRICE			
Sedan	8,129	8,210	7,964
87 CHEVY CAPRICE			
Sedan	6,678	6,745	6,544
88 CHRYSLER NEW YORKER			
Sedan	11,368	11,481	11,139
87 CHRYSLER NEW YORKER			
Sedan	8,110	8,194	7,951
88 CHRYSLER FIFTH AVENUE			
Sedan	11,039	11,147	10,815
87 CHRYSLER FIFTH AVENUE			
Sedan	8,697	8,784	8,523
88 DODGE ARIES AMERICA			
Sedan	5,601	5,657	5,489
87 DODGE ARIES			
Sedan	4,558	4,604	4,466
88 DODGE SHADOW			
Liftbk 5 Dr	5,951	6,010	5,833
87 DODGE SHADOW			
Liftbk 4 Dr	4,927	4,976	4,828
88 DODGE DYNASTY			
Sedan	8,972	9,061	8,790
88 FORD ESCORT			
Htchbk 4 Dr GL	5,064	5,116	4,964
87 FORD ESCORT			
Htchbk 4 Dr GL	4,073	4,114	3,990
88 FORD MUSTANG			
LX-4 Coupe	6,810	6,879	6,675
87 FORD MUSTANG			
LX-4 Coupe	5,559	5,615	5,446
88 FORD TEMPO			
GL Sedan 4 Dr	6,017	6,079	5,896
87 FORD TEMPO			
GL Sedan 4 Dr	4,835	4,884	4,739
88 FORD TAURUS			
GL Sedan 4 Dr	8,117	8,258	8,015
87 FORD TAURUS			
GL Sedan 4 Dr	6,715	6,782	6,579
88 FORD CROWN VICTORIA			
Sedan	10,392	10,497	10,185
87 FORD CROWN VICTORIA			
Sedan	8,625	8,712	8,456
88 FORD THUNDERBIRD			
Coupe	9,244	9,340	9,061
87 FORD THUNDERBIRD			
Coupe	7,733	7,810	7,577
88 LINCOLN			
Town Car Sedan	15,399	15,551	15,091
Mark VII Coupe	17,139	17,312	16,794
Continental Sedan	19,034	19,225	18,653
87 LINCOLN			
Town Car Sedan	12,977	13,105	12,717
Mark VII Coupe	13,901	14,041	13,624
Continental Sedan	14,114	14,255	13,829
88 MAZDA 626			
LX Sedan 4 Dr	8,832	8,919	8,655
88 MERCURY COUGAR			
LS Coupe	9,685	9,781	9,493
87 MERCURY COUGAR			
LS Coupe	8,138	8,218	7,977
88 MERCURY TOPAZ			
GS Sedan 4 Dr	6,144	6,204	6,019
87 MERCURY TOPAZ			
GS Sedan 4 Dr	4,869	4,916	4,768
88 MERCURY SABLE			
GS Sedan	8,303	8,386	8,137
87 MERCURY SABLE			
GS Sedan	6,742	6,807	6,607
88 MERCURY GRAND MARQUIS			
Sedan	11,579	11,693	11,346
87 MERCURY GRAND MARQUIS			
Sedan	9,810	9,907	9,613
88 NISSAN SENTRA			
Sedan 2 Dr	4,808	4,856	4,712
88 NISSAN STANZA			
E Ntch 4 Dr	7,868	7,947	7,710
88 NISSAN MAXIMA			
SE Sedan	11,970	12,090	11,730
87 NISSAN SENTRA			
Sedan 2 Dr	3,934	3,973	3,854
87 NISSAN STANZA			
E Ntch 4 Dr	6,177	6,238	6,052
87 NISSAN MAXIMA			
SE Sedan	9,300	9,392	9,114
88 OLDS CIERA			
Coupe	7,556	7,630	7,405
Sedan	7,638	7,713	7,483
87 OLDS CIERA			
S Coupe	6,402	6,467	6,274
Sedan	6,475	6,540	6,345
88 OLDS CALAIS			
Sedan	7,553	7,630	7,404
87 OLDS CALAIS			
Sedan	6,404	6,467	6,275
88 OLDS CUTLASS SUPREME			
Coupe	8,784	8,872	8,609
87 OLDS CUTLASS SUPREME			
Coupe	7,408	7,481	7,262
Sedan	7,408	7,481	7,262
88 OLDS 98 REGENCY			
Sedan	11,411	11,526	11,183
87 OLDS 98 REGENCY			
Sedan	9,442	9,536	9,255
88 PLYMOUTH RELIANT			
Sedan	5,601	5,657	5,489
87 PLYMOUTH RELIANT			
Sedan	4,572	4,617	4,479
88 PLYMOUTH SUNDANCE			
Liftbk 4 Dr	5,946	6,005	5,829
87 PLYMOUTH SUNDANCE			
Liftbk 4 Dr	4,894	4,947	4,799
88 PLYMOUTH GRAN FURY			
Salon Sedan	6,360	6,422	6,233
87 PLYMOUTH GRAN FURY			
Salon Sedan	5,142	5,192	5,039
88 PONTIAC SUNBIRD			
SE Coupe	6,241	6,305	6,117
Sedan	6,325	6,388	6,198
87 PONTIAC SUNBIRD			
SE Coupe	4,925	4,975	4,824
Sedan	4,850	4,897	4,752
88 PONTIAC 6000			
Coupe	7,329	7,400	7,181
Sedan	7,409	7,484	7,260
87 PONTIAC 6000			
Coupe	5,918	5,977	5,801
Sedan	5,987	6,047	5,869
88 PONTIAC GRAND AM			
Sedan	7,415	7,487	7,267
87 PONTIAC GRAND AM			
Sedan	6,595	6,661	6,461
88 PONTIAC BONNEVILLE			
Sedan	9,631	9,729	9,438
87 PONTIAC BONNEVILLE			
Sedan	8,154	8,239	7,991
88 PONTIAC GRAND PRIX			
Coupe	9,007	9,097	8,827
87 PONTIAC GRAND PRIX			
Coupe	7,484	7,559	7,337
88 TOYOTA COROLLA			
Sedan 4 Dr Deluxe	6,760	6,848	6,645
88 TOYOTA CAMRY			
Sedan 4 Dr Deluxe	9,395	9,489	9,208
88 TOYOTA CRESSIDA			
Lux Sedan	14,065	14,206	13,784
87 TOYOTA COROLLA			
Sedan 4 Dr Deluxe	5,469	5,552	5,358
87 TOYOTA CAMRY			
Sedan 4 Dr Deluxe	7,970	8,051	7,812
87 TOYOTA CRESSIDA			
Lux Sedan	11,443	11,555	11,212
88 VOLKSWAGEN JETTA			
Sedan 4 Dr	7,397	7,471	7,251
87 VOLKSWAGEN JETTA			
Sedan 4 Dr	6,123	6,184	6,000

CALENDAR

OCTOBER

5-7—Automotive Fleet & Leasing Association Mid-Year Conference, The Ritz-Carlton Buckhead, Atlanta, GA. Information: (213) 376-8788, ext. 77.

14-19—International Association of Chiefs of Police Annual Convention, The Commonwealth Convention Center, Louisville, KY. Information: (703) 243-6500.

16-17—NAFA's 4th Annual West Coast Fleet Management Seminar, Hyatt Regency, San Francisco Airport, San Francisco, CA. Information: (415) 347-1234.

18-22—National Auto Auction Association Annual Convention, Marriott Hotel & Marina, San Diego, CA. Information: (402) 464-2170.

22-23—NVLA Midyear Meeting, The Forum Hotel, Chicago, IL. Information: (213) 838-3170.

24-26—NAFA Professional Fleet Management Seminars, The Hyatt Orlando, Kissimmee, FL. Information: (201) 494-8100.

29-Nov. 1—American Trucking Association Convention, Hilton Hotel, Chicago, IL. Information: (703) 838-1700.

NOVEMBER

16-19—CATRALAs' Western Regional Conference, Newporter Hyatt Resort, Newport Beach, CA. Information: (202) 223-2118.

15-19—International Taxicab Association 71st Annual Convention and Trade Show, Sheraton Harbor Island, San Diego, CA. Information: (301) 946-5700.

DECEMBER

Nov. 30-Dec. 3—Avis Licensee Meeting, Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco, CA. Information: (516) 222-3000.

5-7—Maintenance Management Seminar, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI. Information: (517) 353-1790.

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GAS PRICES

City	UNLEADED Cost Per Gallon Unleaded Full-Serve	 Self-Serve
Birmingham, AL	129.4¢	95.9¢
Pine Bluff, AR	129.9	89.9
Inglewood, CA	157.9	98.4
Washington, D.C.	143.2	111.1
Fort Myers, FL	132.4	96.9
Atlanta, GA	130.1	90.2
Maui, HI	187.6	146.6
Muncie, IN	135.9	88.9
Springfield, MA	107.9	101.2
Kirksville, MO	105.9	85.4
Las Vegas, NV	123.2	117.9
New York City, NY	125.7	96.9
Charleston, SC	122.9	95.9
Austin, TX	125.4	96.9
Milwaukee, WI	129.6	97.6

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